



U.S. Department of Justice

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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S CHILD PROTECTION INITIATIVE

Our office has successfully charged and convicted a disturbingly high – and increasing number of criminal defendants in the past year who have engaged in despicable acts of criminality that endanger the safety and innocence of our community's most precious asset: our children. Child pornography, human trafficking, interstate transportation of minors for the purpose of engaging in sex and other sorts of predatory activity upon children are all federal offenses about which we have done much. But we can also do more; and I formally commit today to doing all we can to protect our children through the tough enforcement of federal criminal law.

Therefore, in response to these troubling trends, and in conjunction with Attorney General Alberto Gonzales' Project Safe Childhood, I am announcing the Eastern District of Michigan's establishment of a Child Protection Initiative that is intended to ensure that we are doing everything we possibly can to protect and take care of our district's children. Specifically, we intend to seek the maximum legally permissible sentences in such cases, and we will intensify and redouble our enforcement and our community education programs to prevent, detect, punish and

deter horrendous crimes against children. Our efforts are specifically designed to prosecute those who prey on children, to put them in prison, and to make sure that they are not free to hurt others through additional degenerate acts. We will also work hard to cooperate with other federal, state and local law enforcement entities to address this problem.

There are several important parts to this new program:

- **We will “burn with determination.”**

We will never yield, back down or shirk from our obligation to enforce federal laws protecting our children.

- **We will seek maximum sentences.**

We pledge to charge the most serious of all readily provable child exploitation offenses, insuring that offenders face the maximum sentences available under the law. I further pledge, and it is hereby the policy of this office, that after analysis of the facts in every specific case, no plea offers will be made except to the very top of the applicable sentencing guidelines range in all child exploitation cases.

- **We will create an expert corps of child exploitation prosecutors.**

Beginning today, I am designating seven outstanding Assistant United States Attorneys to become experts in child exploitation cases. Our efforts will be led by Assistant United States Attorney John O'Brien, who presently serves as Deputy Chief of our General Crimes Unit, and who has a great deal of hands on experience in this area of enforcement. Highly skilled attorneys from

our General Crimes Unit, Special Prosecutions Unit and Cross Functional Civil Rights Task Force will be assigned to support this effort as well.

Our office currently has 65 open child exploitation cases, and many more in the pipeline. Under the initiative announced today, the designated attorneys will receive specialized training in handling these cases, and they will work directly with expert agents of the FBI, ICE, the Postal Inspection Service, and the US Secret Service to ensure that all of the cases they have in this area will be prosecuted swiftly, efficiently and vigorously.

- **Strategic partnerships with federal, state and local authorities.**

I will meet forthwith with all of our partners in federal, state and local law enforcement to discuss and implement the most innovative strategies possible to deal with the scourge of crimes committed against our children. Specifically, in an age of downsized federal resources and the need to do more with less, I will seek working relationships and a district wide task force that will permit our authorities to effectively share information, coordinate resources and work more effectively together, even with the full knowledge that no new federal dollars are available to fund new programs or prosecution positions. We will do all we can to focus the task force on large scale violators of federal laws designed to protect children and we will further seek to commit the most up to date law enforcement techniques in practice today to fight, for instance, the producers of child pornography.

Moreover, we will work closely with and consistently ask for significant support from our colleagues in Washington. In appropriate cases, we will seek staffing help and attorney assignments from lawyers in the Civil Rights, Criminal and Tax Divisions of the United States

Department of Justice.

● **We will implement an Internet Safety and Awareness program that will be offered in local schools to students and parents.**

Our office currently conducts Project Sentry, which is an award winning anti-drug and firearms violence outreach program in local schools. I am expanding this program, effective immediately, to include an Internet Safety and Awareness component. The purpose of this program will be to make certain that our children, particularly middle school and high school students, are aware of the dangers of the Internet and that they are also aware that law enforcement has the tools necessary to detect and apprehend those who use the Internet to commit crimes.

U.S. Attorney General Gonzales recently announced “Project Safe Childhood,” which is a program to expand the federal funds available for community awareness and education programs related to child exploitation. Our district’s Child Protection Initiative is consistent with the Attorney General’s approach, and our program will become an active participant in Project Safe Childhood as it is implemented and carried out.

Our children are the lifeline of our community. I personally pledge to do all I can to keep them safe and to fully prosecute those who would endanger them.

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